

CLAIMS

1. Interface module for carrying out transaction-based electronic commerce wherein
 - the interface module (1) is connected between a terminal (4) and a data network (8), such as the internet for example and
 - has a module (1, 3) for displaying (14) and monitoring the flow of useful data (5, 6) to and from the terminal (4), the display module having access to templates (12) to enable the useful data transmitted to be displayed as documents with the help of the templates.
2. Interface module according to claim 1, characterised in that useful data that is interchanged can be shown on a monitor (14) as a document by means of an interpreter application (10).
3. Interface module according to either of the foregoing claims, characterised by means (3) for the manual and/or automatic release and/or selection for transmission (5, 6) of displayed useful data to or from the terminal (4).
4. Interface module according to claim 3, characterised by means (3) for selecting useful data (5, 6) to be transmitted for subsequent transfer to the terminal (4) and/or an address on the data network (8).
5. Interface module according to claim 4, characterised in that the selection is made by reference to a display (14) as a document of the useful data to be transmitted.
6. Interface module according to one of the foregoing claims, characterised in that it is configurable from a central intelligence (9) on the data network (8).

7. Interface module according to one of the foregoing claims, characterised in that it has a file system (2) in which is mapped, by means of templates (12), a workflow for a business process which is to be dealt with by means of an interchange of useful data via the interface module (1).
8. Interface module according to claim 7, characterised in that the templates (12) can be entered or modified in the file system (2) from a central intelligence (9) on the data network (8).
9. Interface module according to one of claims 6 to 8, characterised in that if there is a change to the configuration of the interface module (1), parameters of processes thereby affected in the workflow mapped by means of templates (12) can be automatically adjusted.
10. Interface module according to one of claims 6 to 9, characterised in that templates and/or a complete workflow can be coupled to predetermined destinations on the data network (8) by means of a mapping unit (16).
11. Computer software program, characterised in that, in the state where it is loaded onto a computer it implements an interface module (1) according to one of the foregoing claims.
12. Method of carrying out document-based electronic commerce, wherein an interface module (1) is connected between a terminal (4) and a data network (8) such as the internet for example, characterised by the step of displaying (14) and monitoring the flow of useful data (5, 6) to and from the terminal (4) as documents by interpreting the useful data by means of templates stored in the interface module (1).

13. Method according to claim 12, characterised in that the interchanged useful data is shown on a monitor (14) as a document by means of an interpreter application (10).
14. Method according to claim 12 or 13, characterised by the step (3) of manually or automatically releasing and/or selecting displayed useful data for transmission (5, 6).
15. Method according to claim 14, characterised by the step (3) of selecting useful data (5, 6) to be transmitted for subsequent transfer.
16. Method according to claim 15, characterised in that the selection takes place by reference to a display (14) as a document of the useful data to be transmitted.
17. Method according to one of claims 12 to 16, characterised in that the interface module (1) is configured from a central intelligence (9) on the data network (8).
18. Method according to one of claims 12 to 17, characterised in that a workflow for a business process which is to be dealt with by means of the interchange of useful data via the interface module (1) is mapped in a file system (2) by means of templates.
19. Method according to claim 18, characterised in that the templates (12) can be entered and/or modified in the file system (2) by a central intelligence (9) on the data network (8).
20. Method according to one of claims 17 to 19, characterised in that if there is a change to the configuration of the interface module (1), parameters of

processes thereby affected in the workflow mapped by means of templates (12) are automatically adjusted.

21. Method according to one of claims 17 to 20, characterised in that templates (12) can be coupled to predetermined destinations on the data network (8) by means of a mapping unit (16).
22. Computer software program, characterised in that in the state where it is loaded onto a computer it implements a method according to one of claims 12 to 21.
23. Interface module for displaying the flow of data (5, 6) between a terminal (4) and a data network (8) such as the internet for example, having:
 - a monitoring layer (3) for displaying and monitoring the flow of useful data (5, 6) to and from the terminal (4)
 - a logic layer for interpreting, converting and transferring data to the terminal (4) and data network (8), and
 - a file layer (13) in which templates (12) are stored, with
 - an interpreter application (10) processing incoming and/or outgoing useful data to and/or from the logic layer (11) by means of these templates (12) which allows the useful data to be displayed in the form of documents.
24. Interface module according to claim 23, characterised in that a workflow is mapped in the business layer (14) by means of a preset sequence of documents.
25. Interface module according to claim 23 or 24, characterised in that a facility is provided for remote maintenance of the interface module (1) by means of access to the business layer (14).

26. Interface module according to one of claims 23 to 25, characterised in that the business layer (14) also has a data conversion function.
27. Interface module according to one of claims 23 to 26, characterised in that the business layer (14) performs the function of user access control.
28. Interface module according to one of claims 23 to 27, characterised in that the file layer (13) has a function for distinguishing between useful process data, data holdings and configuration data.
29. Interface module according to one of claims 23 to 28, characterised in that it is connected to a database (14) in which useful data is stored.
30. Interface module according to one of claims 23 to 29, characterised in that it is connected to a database (14) in which templates (12) in the interface module (12) are coupled to predetermined destinations on the data network (8) by means of a mapping unit (16).
31. System for carrying out electronic business processes based on the interchange of documents, characterised in that it has at least two interface modules (1) according to one of claims 24 to 31 which communicate with one another by means of a data network.
32. Computer software program, characterised in that in the state where it is loaded onto a computer it implements an interface module (1) according to one of claims 23 to 31.